

Dominello Residence
38 Wesley Street
Elanora Heights NSW 2101

16 February 2004

General Manager
Pittwater Council
PO Box 882
Mona Vale NSW 1660

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Proposed rezoning of Heydon Estate & Uniting Church land, Ingleside & Elanora Heights (ref: R0005/03 & R0006/03)

We refer to your letter dated 6 February 2004. In response we wish to express our alarm and dismay over the prospect of the proposed rezoning of the abovenamed sites. Such a rezoning would not be sustainable in the area. It will cause increased traffic in the area, which the current infrastructure will be unable to accommodate. We are not only referring to increased traffic on Wesley Street, but also to added strain on the main roads in the area like Pittwater, Powderworks, Rickard, Elanora, and Mona Vale Roads. All of these roads are already under strain trying to accommodate the increased development in the area. We ask that the Council consider the impact that this rezoning will have on the entire area. But even if Council considers the immediate area it should be obvious that the rezoning will not be sustainable. Wesley Street is much too narrow, winding and steep and will not be able to accommodate additional traffic. Poor visibility is a particular problem on Wesley Street. It is more like a crescent than a street. On a number of occasions residents driving along Wesley Street have almost collided with residents coming out of Foxall Street. Many residents park their cars on the street and children in the neighbourhood like to play out on the street. These conditions already make it difficult to drive along Wesley Street safely. The proposed roadworks will increase the chance of accidents on Wesley Street. Particularly, the proposed new road access is on a bend, which will increase poor visibility on the street and the chance of accidents. We also consider that the proposed road access is too narrow to accommodate a new street wide enough for two-way traffic. We live opposite the proposed street access site. Presently the area is full of lush green bushland, which we can see from our house. We do not want it to be destroyed and replaced by a road and residential development, which by comparison, will just be an eye sore.

We understand that with the rezoning residential development will follow which will involve extensive roadworks. It will be very difficult to change Wesley Street so as to accommodate more traffic. There is no suggestion for access from Ingleside Road, which could alleviate some of the pressure as well as improve the very dismal state of Ingleside Road (adjoining roads are also in much need of attention). However, the provision of additional roads will not resolve the situation. Council needs to consider the

real cost of the development. Twenty years ago there was a move to develop the same area, but Council quashed such a move. Why do not the same conditions and reasons apply in relation to this renewal of interest to develop the area? We believe that not enough consideration has been put into the environmental impacts this development will have on the site and on adjoining areas. The area, in comparison to other bushland areas close to it (eg. Wattle Road and Maclean Street, Ingleside) is in pristine condition. Why would Council want to destroy it? Interfering with the escarpment will impact on the environment – there could be no way of denying that. It will have an impact on the wildlife and on the plants and trees, but also will impact on areas outside the proposed development – the Warriewood wetlands. The wetlands have been repeatedly assaulted in recent times and Council should be considering ways to alleviate the stress on the wetlands, not exacerbate it. Interfering with the escarpment could mean the destruction of an ecosystem that appears to be working in harmony with nature. We do not want the same fate as Warriewood wetlands for the escarpment.

It was not clear from your letter how many dwellings are to be constructed on the site. Some reports suggest that 10 new dwellings are proposed to be built, each on one acre of land (Pittwater Life, February 2004, pp. 25,36). We are opposed to any new dwellings being built in that area. But we are also skeptical that there will only be a limited number of dwellings built, considering the extent of the proposed roadworks. How can Council ensure that only a limited number of dwellings are built in the area? Recently, it has also been proposed to increase residential plot sizes to 800 square metres. That will still mean that potentially 50 (if not more) houses could be built in the area if the Council continues to accept applications for rezoning in that area. With every house built the environment will suffer, until it comes the time that the environmental argument no longer has currency to prevent further development of the area. We have already seen this happen, not only in Warriewood Valley, but also in Oxford Falls – in the case of Oxford Falls extensive development has taken place where the environment was relatively untouched. We are also concerned that Council will permit the construction of residential dwellings in a fire path and that lives will be put at risk as a result. This also brings us back to access to the area. How can the safety of the residents be assured if there is only one road to the area? As residents of Wesley Street we are very concerned about the safe evacuation of Wesley and Foxall Street residents in the case of an emergency, like a fire, and the strain on the street if additional residents require evacuation. If an evacuation is necessary it can only be out of Wesley Street.

At this stage we do not believe that enough thought has been put into the rezoning and future development of the area. There are still outstanding issues in relation to providing appropriate access to the area, which will not put additional strain on an already overburdened infrastructure. Preserving the environment also should be at the forefront of Council's mind. We have seen the impact that development can have on the environment in Warriewood Valley and Oxford Falls where nature's beauty has been replaced by monstrous project homes. We want to continue to look out at nature's beauty and not be faced with another environment disaster. The environment as it is cannot survive under such pressure. We are very much afraid that the natural life of the

escarpment will not be able to survive such interference as has been proposed. Once the environment is destroyed it is gone forever – Council must already be aware of that.

There are alternatives that should be considered. It would appear from the report in Pittwater Life, that the State government should consider having other land it owns rezoned for sale – this appears to have been the original plan and the State should stick to it. As for the Uniting Church, they appear to be riding on the coat tails of the State by joining their application to the State's application and we are concerned they are obtaining an unfair advantage because of it. However, if the Uniting Church is unsuccessful, they may try again in the future. To end this matter once and for all Council should acquire the land from the Uniting Church or consider alternatives (like a land swap). There must be alternatives that can and should be considered in this situation. We are alarmed that the Council may not consider any alternative arrangements.

Our family lived in Ingleside originally until moving to Wesley Street in 1979. We have lived there ever since. In this time we have seen many changes to the environment. In Ingleside only occasionally would we see koalas in trees, but there were some. Now there are none. The same area is now infested with weeds and is prone to infestation by feral rabbits. In Elanora Heights we still see some possums and bandicoots in the area (and an occasional wallaby is spotted on Mona Vale Road) but with road kill, competition with feral animals, and increased development, their chances for survival have diminished. After the 1994 fires it was rare to see native birds in the area, but they have come back, and they now must compete with introduced species in the air and on the ground for survival and for scarce resources. We see the escarpment as a place for these native wildlife species to find sanctuary, which must not be destroyed. Instead of developing the site as a residential area, Council should be enhancing its quality as a wildlife sanctuary. There are many sections of the Ingleside area, which have been detrimentally affected by human contact, and which could be improved with well-regulated residential development– the escarpment is not yet one of these and all should be done to stop this from occurring.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our views on the proposed rezoning. We are aware that many residents in the area oppose the proposal. We are concerned that little has been done to draw the community's attention to the proposed rezoning and future development and in particular that no signs have been put up around the designated site indicating to the world at large that a rezoning proposal is before Council. We query the Council's wisdom in confining official notification of the proposal to adjoining owners or community groups when the entire Pittwater community could be adversely affected if the proposal goes ahead.

Yours faithfully,

The Residents,
38 Wesley Street
Elanora Heights NSW 2101

Vincenzo Dominello
Francesca Dominello
Michael Grinbergs
Edita Grinbergs (aged 2)

francesca Dominello.

V. Dominello